

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3044

Title: Arcus Planning Back-Office System Renewal

Executive summary:

This request is to seek approval for the spend of £280,800 to fund the renewal of licence costs for a further two years for the back-office system (Arcus) that supports the GLA's Planning service.

The Arcus back-office system has been in operation for the past three years and has enabled workflow management and efficiencies across the service. The system is now being used across the Development Management, Viability, London Plan and Environment teams, as well as facilitating closer collaboration with TfL. The system enables shared access to planning referrals and documentation.

The renewal of the contract will enable: the continued operation of the GLA's Planning service; and continued streamlining and collaboration initiatives across the teams to develop and deliver a more joined-up service.

Decision:

That the Mayor approves expenditure of £280,800 for two years' licence costs, which includes:

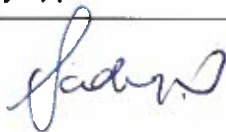
- 92 system user licences
- 70 PDF measuring tool licences
- 30GB file storage
- 5000 customer/community logins per month.

Mayor of London

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Date:

3/10/22

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE MAYOR

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The Greater London Authority Act 1999 places responsibility for strategic planning in London on the Mayor; and requires him to produce a strategic spatial strategy for London, and to keep it under review. The Mayor is also able to intervene in the planning process, through his power to review strategically important applications, and call them in to be determined through the application referral process.
- 1.2. In 2019 the GLA undertook a procurement for a new back-office system to replace a previous in-house system called PAWS, under MD2525. Because the planning process undertaken by the Mayor is very different from the role of other planning authorities, there were a limited number of back-office system providers willing to develop solutions that met the specific needs of the service.
- 1.3. The GLA Planning team needs to be able to operate as both a strategic policy body and a local planning authority. It therefore requires a range of tools and functionality; and clear, robust business processes to support its functions.
- 1.4. There have been a significant number of benefits of having an open and up-to-date back-office system. In addition to workflow improvements, these have included faster submission for boroughs; online payments for pre application meetings and PPAs; and the ability to monitor, track, report on and share information about referable applications. A key objective for any future system is to continue to embed and build on these benefits, which collectively will enable the service to further streamline its business processes, minimise staff overheads and deliver better services.
- 1.5. A re-procurement process has taken place in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code. This process has been led by TfL Commercial, who undertake the GLA's procurement function under a shared service. The GLA has used a G Cloud Framework, which it is permitted to use. The winning provider was Arcus Global.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

Objectives

- 2.1. The outputs and objectives for our back-office system that would be delivered by the renewal of the licence include:
 - embedding robust and lean business processes across all Development Management functions of the planning service
 - a clear set of processes (including process documents) that enable workflow tools to increase transparency in the planning process
 - a live dataset of performance of the GLA's Planning service, in terms of both meeting statutory targets and having an impact on the planning system
 - minimising overheads
 - having clear and clean performance monitoring data for the planning service and referral process.

Other benefits

- 2.2. There are likely to be other benefits from this project, including:

- increased transparency in the decision-making process for Londoners
- increased recording and reporting of affordable housing
- faster consultation processes and integration of consultees' comments into the process
- increased visibility of workloads and pressures across the planning service and early identification of logjams in the planning process
- reduced pressure on the GLA's Technology Group
- better interaction with remote and agile working
- integrated payment systems enabling payment for services upfront, reducing the management overhead of payments, and reducing potential for unrecovered debt.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. The GLA is subject to the public sector equality duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The Act requires the identification and evaluation of the likely potential impacts, both positive and negative, of GLA decisions on those with protected characteristics. The Mayor is to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This may involve, in particular, removing or minimising any disadvantage suffered by those who share a relevant protected characteristic and taking steps to meet the needs of such people. In certain circumstances compliance with the Act may involve treating people with a protected characteristic more favourably than those without it.
- 3.2. The project is not likely to have any particular impact or difference in impact on any persons with a protected characteristic. The change as a result of this project, day to day, will be internal to the organisation in the form of business processes. It is not expected to create any adverse impact on staff with protected characteristics; but this will be monitored and any matters arising will be managed in line with HR policies. Externally the implementation of this project will ensure more transparency in the Mayor's decision-making, allowing information to be more accessible and searchable. Provisions for compliance with the PSED were included in the procurement process. The new website will be developed and tested in accordance with GLA accessibility requirements.

4. Other considerations

Project costs

- 4.1. Prices were sought for a two-year contract with the ability to extend for an additional year initially, and one further year after that if required. There are no other implementation costs associated with this project other than existing staff time. The licence costs are illustrated in the table below.

		Total Annual Licence Fees				
Product	Quantity	1st Oct 22 - 30th Sept 23	1st Oct 23 - 30th Sept 24			Total Contract Value
Arcus Built Environment Suite	92	£140,400	£140,400			
PDF Tron	70					
Conga Composer	87					
Salesforce File Storage	30Gb					
Customer Community Logins	5001 / month					
Total Licence cost		£140,400	£140,00			
Implementation Services						
Implementation Services		N/A				
Total Project Cost		£140,400	£140,400			£280,800

Key risks and issues

Risk description	Mitigation/risk response	Probability (1 high to 4)	Impact (1 high to 4)	RAG
Seeking a replacement system would add additional costs and resources to implement.	Renew the current back office provider (Arcus) licences.	4	1	G
Not executing the renewal by 30 September would mean planning staff are without a back-office system to use; and no data would be publicly available.	Seek approval by CIB by 26 th September.	3	1	R

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.3. The GLA Planning service is key to delivering the Mayor's London Plan. This back-office system supports the processing, monitoring and decision-making on referable planning applications, which are assessed against the range of London Plan policies for new developments.
- 4.4. The Mayor of London Order (2008) sets out the criteria for planning applications to be referred to the Mayor for a decision.

Conflict of interests

- 4.5. Special regard will need to be given to risks around interests that parties have in the development process. It is recognised that there are occasions where suppliers will seek to act for developers, whilst also acting for planning authorities. Safeguards will need to be put in place to ensure that

conflicts of interest do not normally arise, and where they do, appropriate safeguarding procedures are put in place.

- 4.6. There are no conflicts of interest to note from anyone involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form.

Impact assessments and consultation

- 4.7. This decision relates to achieving the objectives set out in London Plan policies. The development of the London Plan included a public consultation process and integrated impact assessment incorporating sustainability, community safety, health and equalities assessments. There is no requirement to further consult or undertake an impact assessment specific to this decision.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 The contract for the Authority's back-end planning system requires renewal as it currently comes to an end in September 2022. The system supports the planning service which is a statutory responsibility of the Mayor.
- 5.2 The cost of the renewal is £280,800 and will span across two financial years. This expenditure will be funded by income obtained from Pre-Planning Applications which is currently held within the GLA's reserves and will be drawn upon when required.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The Mayor is responsible for strategic planning in Greater London and his statutory powers are set out in Part VIII of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 ("the Act") and the Town and Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 which sets out which strategic planning applications are referable to the Mayor.
- 6.2. Section 30 of the Act gives the Mayor the power to do anything he considers will promote the improvement of the environment in Greater London and section 34 of the Act gives the Mayor the authority to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to the exercise of any of the statutory functions of the Authority.
- 6.3. The renewal of this licence will ensure that the Mayor can carry out his strategic planning and environmental functions efficiently and effectively and as such may reasonably be regarded as facilitating, being conducive or incidental to the exercise of the Mayor's powers detailed above.
- 6.4. In taking the decisions requested, the Mayor must have due regard to the PSED – namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, gender reassignment, age, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief) and persons who do not (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Tender period	29 August – 9 September 2022
Appointment of supplier	30 September
Contract start date	1 October 2022
Contract end date	30 September 2024

Appendices and supporting papers:
None.

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Part 1 – Deferral

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under the FoIA should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to
confirm the
following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Peter Kemp has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Sponsoring Director:

Phil Graham has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

✓

Mayoral Adviser:

Jules Pipe has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations.

✓

Advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

Corporate Investment Board

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 26 September 2022

✓

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature

D. Gane

Date: 26/9/22

CHIEF OF STAFF:

I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Mayor

Signature

D. Bellamy

Date 26/9/22

